*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

February 11 – 16

*Jesus in John’s Gospel*

**Monday, February 11 John 7:1-9**

*“Show yourself to the world”*

It has been six months since Jesus was in Jerusalem for the spring Passover Festival (John 5), and he has been avoiding Judea because he knows the depth of hostility waiting for him there. Still, Jesus’ brothers put pressure on him to go to Jerusalem for the autumn Festival of Tabernacles so that the great holiday audience could see his works. If he was to get a movement going, why limit himself to out-of-the-way places in Galilee? This is a subtle temptation for Jesus, particularly because it comes from his own brothers who do not believe that he is who he claims to be, the Son of God and the Messiah sent by God. If he shows himself to the world, as they urge, is it possible that they might come to believe? Be dazzling, they are urging, and you will win a following!

The brothers portray precisely the view found among the crowds in chapter 6. The brothers acknowledge that Jesus can do miracles, but miracles do not necessarily lead to faith. Only God can provide the divine insight needed for a person to comprehend fully the identity of his Son.

*Though I did not see your miracles, Jesus, still I believe in you. Amen.*

**Tuesday, February 12 John 7:10-13**

*“Jesus went, though secretly”*

When Jesus said in the previous verses that he would not “go up” to the festival, he explained that he could not because it was not yet his time. “Going up” in Greek can mean both pilgrimage to Jerusalem or ascension. For Jesus, “going up” is symbolic of his “hour” of ascension following his death and resurrection. Jesus’ brothers, however, take his words at face value. They see things from an earthly perspective and assume that Jesus is simply going to avoid the feast. Jesus intends no deception and attends the feast on his own, keeping his identity as quiet as possible in order to avoid those who would like to harm him.

John’s description of the anticipation of the crowd sets the stage for what is to come. Jesus’ arrival brings controversy and division. In their conversations about Jesus some from the crowd describe him as good while others describe him as a deceiver, a fraud. But overshadowing all is the fear of the common person for the Jewish leaders, who have decided to kill him. So, just as Jesus didn’t come to Jerusalem publicly, those who were for Jesus did not support him publicly.

*May I not allow fear, Jesus, to keep me from speaking in support of you. Amen.*

**Wednesday, February 13 John 7:14-24**

*“Jesus began to teach”*

At the midpoint of the feast, Jesus enters the temple courts and teaches publicly. Questions are launched by Jesus’ listeners that permit him to describe his identity and mission more completely. But the questions do more. They disclose how little his audience really understands (similar to Nicodemus’ questions about rebirth). Buried in Jesus’ answers are ironic messages fully beyond the grasp of his listeners. So, when they want to know where Jesus went to school and learned so much, his response is essentially, “Heaven!”

Jesus is well aware that his healing of the man on the Sabbath some months before has aroused the fierce opposition of the Jewish leaders. It was then they first began seeking to kill him for breaking Sabbath law. So Jesus now deals with them on their own ground. Does not the law of Moses, which they claim to obey so absolutely, allow the act of circumcision to be performed on the Sabbath? And this is only a partial healing, a sign of belonging for God’s people. How then could they condemn the total healing of man on the Sabbath?

*What you teach, Jesus, is truth for you received it from your Father. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

February 11 - 16

*Jesus in John’s Gospel*

**Thursday, February 14 John 7:25-36**

*“I’m not here on my own”*

While some are wondering whether Jesus could be the Messiah, others dismiss the idea out of hand. Examining Jesus on an earthly level, they think that since they can trace his human origins he is disqualified from messianic status. Scholars have uncovered evidence that many Jews expected the Messiah to appear suddenly, mysteriously, since he would be commissioned supernaturally by God. Jesus does not deny that he has an identifiable human history or that he is from a place like Nazareth. Rather, he makes an astounding claim.

He has come from God, whom he knows intimately. This is a divine claim that breaks with Jewish understanding. A Messiah might be powerfully sent by God, but Jesus is claiming to know God and be something of a personal liaison or confidant – a Son! – who now has authority in Jerusalem by virtue of his origins. It is Jesus’ status with the Father that empowers not simply what he does but who he is. As throughout the Gospel, the crowd is divided. While some express openness to Jesus, even belief, others deny him.

*I believe in your Father, Jesus, and I believe in you. Amen.*

**Friday, February 15 John 7:37-39**

*“If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink”*

A water ceremony took place each day of the feast in which a procession of priests descended to the south border of the city to the Gihon Spring. There a priest filled a golden pitcher and carried it back up the hill to the temple, where he would climb the altar steps and pour the water onto the altar. On the seventh (and last) day of the feast, this procession took place seven times. This water ceremony was both a plea to God for rain since the autumn is a time of threatened drought in Israel, and it symbolized the time in the desert wanderings of God’s people when the people were thirsty and God brought water from a rock (Numbers 20).

On this final day of celebration, Jesus steps into public view and makes a stunning pronouncement. As the water ceremony is taking place, he invites anyone who is thirsty to come to him and drink. The water he offers satisfies far deeper and more urgent needs than rain and water in the desert. It is living water which satisfies for all time the spiritual thirst of people for a relationship with God.

*I came to you thirsty, Jesus, and you gave me the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

**Saturday, February 16 John 7:40-53**

*“The crowd was divided about him”*

Again the crowd struggles with Jesus’ identity. On the basis of Jesus’ tremendous claims some are convinced he is a prophet, like Elijah. Others say he is the Messiah. But others point out that he can’t be the Messiah because the Messiah is to come from David’s city, Bethlehem. In their ignorance about the origin of Jesus, these wondering people unknowingly speak the truth. John is a master of so arranging his material that mistakes or ignorance become a subtle means of underlining the truth.

When the Jewish leaders express their disdain for Jesus and for those who are being led astray by him, Nicodemus speaks a word of cautious defense. He is raising the question of justice and legality by simply asking whether they, the leaders, are living up the law which they profess by judging a man before he has had a chance to defend himself. One senses the tension within Nicodemus as he tries to live into new life with Jesus while at the same time trying to be faithful within the leadership system of which he is a part.

*Many speak against you, Jesus, but I will speak for you. Amen.*